GRAIN TRANSPORTATION REPORT

Agricultural Marketing Service
United States Department of Agriculture

DECEMBER 19, 2000

To Our Readers:

Once again, we sincerely appreciate your interest in the Grain Transportation Report, and we intend to continue to provide data and information that we feel may be helpful in improving the efficiency of America's agriculture and transportation sectors. Their interdependence and combined role in the success of the U.S. economy make it imperative that this information be provided as effectively and accurately as possible. As a Federal agency, we will, of course, remain committed to this effort. In addition, based on suggestions from our readers, you may notice several minor changes during the coming year. As always, we remain open to your thoughts and ideas for the report that may help to facilitate business between the two sectors or improve public understanding of grain transportation.

The economic condition of the Nation's agricultural sector may have improved somewhat during recent years due, in part, to a much-needed Federal emergency aid package, improvement in the Asian economy, and legislation aimed at eliminating trade sanctions against what could be potentially strong foreign markets. USDA data, however, indicate only a slight increase in overall U.S. exports of wheat, soybeans, and coarse grains (corn, barley, sorghum, oats, and rye) between the 1998/99 and the 1999/00 marketing years. Modest increases are projected for U.S. corn, wheat, and soybean exports during the 2000/01 marketing year, as well.

Compared to the consequential transportation issues of recent years, U.S. agricultural exports, in general, have not been substantially impeded due to congestion or other service-related issues. Inland waterborne transportation project proposals have, however, received greater attention, stalling progress toward major rehabilitation and new construction projects for the Mississippi and Illinois River lock and dam systems, largely due to strong political, environmental, and economic influences. The United States has been geographically blessed with a navigable waterway system that, for decades, has transported grain and other bulk commodities from the central growing regions to export points efficiently, cost effectively, and in an environmentally friendly manner. While U.S. production costs may be less advantageous than those of our closest competitors, it is our waterway system which helps to maintain our comparative advantage in the worldwide agricultural market. It is an advantage which, although is likely the most crucial to U.S. agriculture, extends beyond the farm sector. Increased pollution, highway maintenance, and other environmental factors would be among the societal costs should we need to rely solely on truck and railroad alternatives. These modal alternatives, while extremely important, are only part of the seamless transportation system that is the pride of the United States, enabling the Nation to maintain its agricultural predominance. Boasting a positive foreign trade balance since the 1960's, U.S. agriculture has been the foundation of a strong U.S. economy. The consequences of not maintaining avenues for exporting its commodities may be crucial and far reaching. We, however, are hopeful that the health and continued growth of the our agricultural sector will be given the attention it deserves.

In closing, please accept our sincerest wishes for a very happy and healthy holiday season and new year.

Sincerely,

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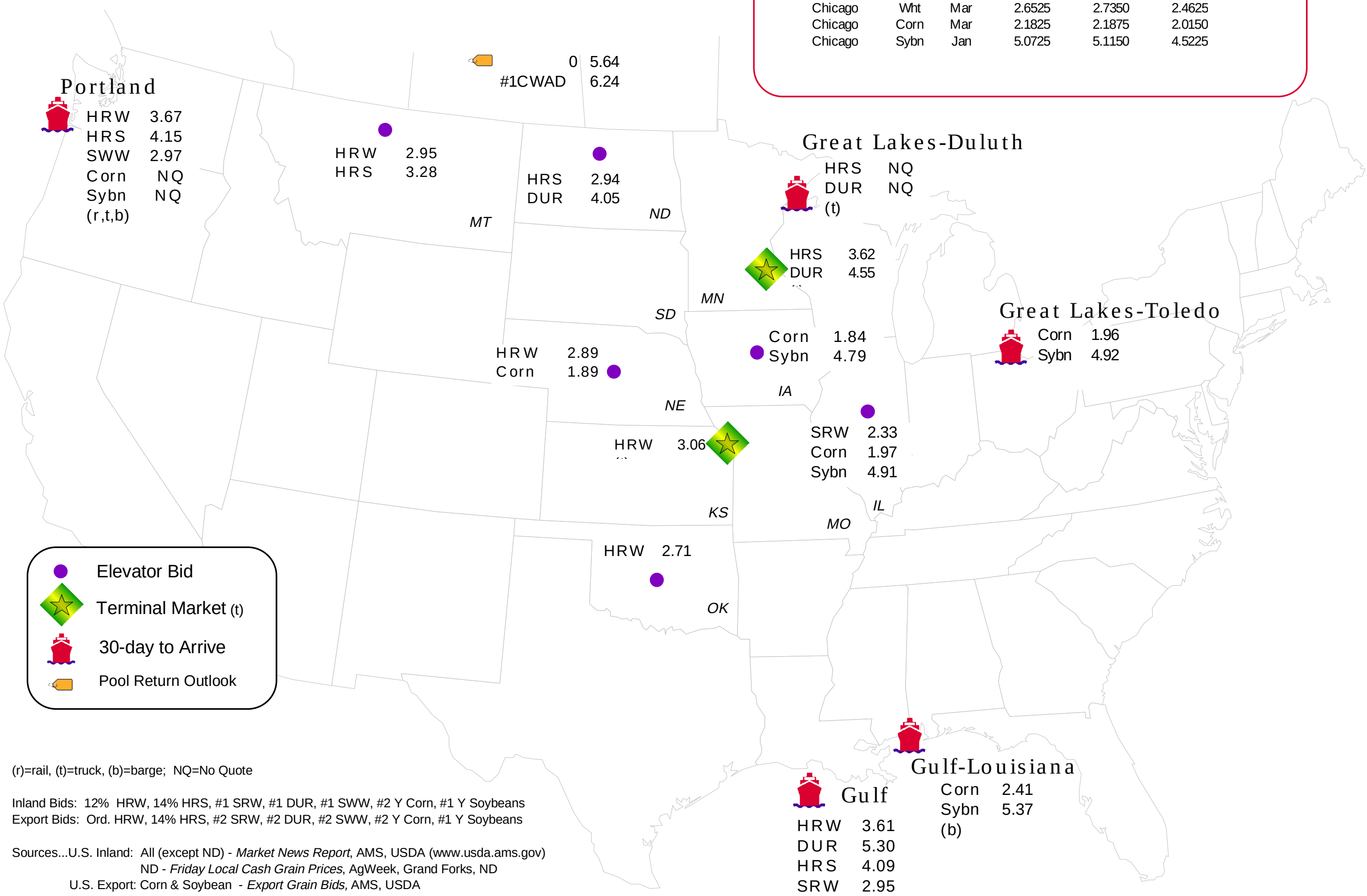
Report is prepared by Karl Hacker and Sigal Nissan, Agricultural Economists, Transportation & Marketing, Agricultural Marketing Service, USDA (202) 690-1304. Report design by Kimberly Vachal, Upper Great Plains Transportation Institute, North Dakota State University. This report can be found on the Internet at www.ams.usda.gov/tmd/grain.htm. E-mail comments to GTR@usda.gov.

Grain Bid Summary

Futures:			12/15/00	Week Ago 12/08/00	Year Ago 12/17/99
Kansas City	Wht	Mar	3.1225	3.2025	2.7100
Minneapolis	Wht	Mar	3.1975	3.2475	3.1550
Minneapolis	Dur	Mar	5.0000	5.3000	n.a.
Chicago	Wht	Mar	2.6525	2.7350	2.4625
Chicago	Corn	Mar	2.1825	2.1875	2.0150
Chicago	Sybn	Jan	5.0725	5.1150	4.5225

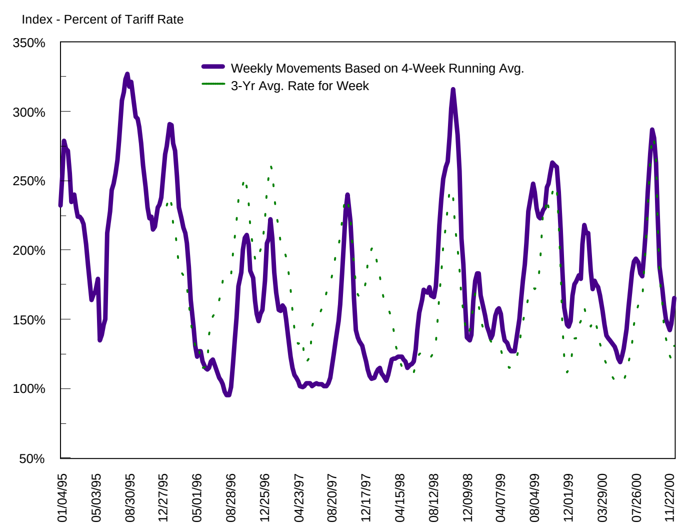


(r)=rail, (t)=truck, (b)=barge; NQ=No Quote

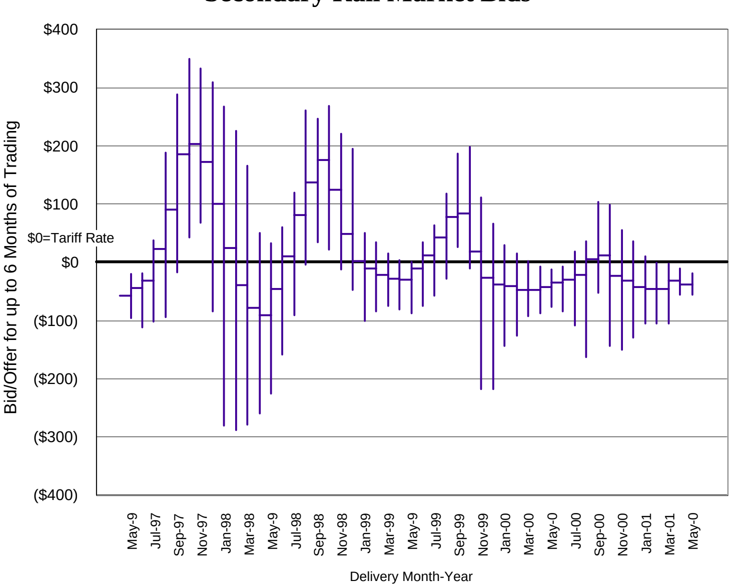
Inland Bids: 12% HRW, 14% HRS, #1 SRW, #1 DUR, #1 SWW, #2 Y Corn, #1 Y Soybeans
Export Bids: Ord. HRW, 14% HRS, #2 SRW, #2 DUR, #2 SWW, #2 Y Corn, #1 Y Soybeans

Sources...U.S. Inland: All (except ND) - *Market News Report*, AMS, USDA (www.usda.ams.gov)
ND - *Friday Local Cash Grain Prices*, AgWeek, Grand Forks, ND
U.S. Export: Corn & Soybean - *Export Grain Bids*, AMS, USDA
Wheat Bids - *Weekly Wheat Report*, U.S. Wheat Associates, Washington, D.C.
Canada: Bids in CAN$, Canadian Wheat Board, Winnipeg (www.cwb.ca)

Spot Barge Rate - Illinois River



Secondary Rail Market Bids



Rail Car 'Auction' Offerings

Delivery for:	Dec-00		Feb-01	
	Offered	% Sold	Offered	% Sold
BNSF-COT	12,540	22%	9,712	1%
UP-GCAS	5,400	2%	5,400	0%

Source: Transportation & Marketing /AMS/USDA; www.bnsf.com; www.uprr.com

Secondary Rail Car Market

Average Premium/Discount to Tariff, $/Car - Last Week

	Delivery Period			
	Dec-00	Jan-01	Feb-01	Mar-01
BNSF-GF	$34	$10	$(2)	$(2)
UP-Pool	$8	$(4)	$(15)	$(20)

Source: T&M/AMS/USDA. Data from Atwood/ConAgra., Harvest States Co-op, James B. Joiner Co., Tradewest Brokerage Co.;
GF=Guaranteed Freight, GEEP=Guaranteed Eqpt. Exchange, Pool=Guaranteed Pool

note... bids listed are market INDICATORS only & are NOT guaranteed prices, missing value=No Bid Quoted

Railroad Car 'Auction' Results

Average Premium/Discount to Tariff, $/Car - Last Auction

Delivery for:	Jan-01	Feb-01	Mar-01
COT/N. Grain	$0	no bid	no bid
COT/S. Grain	no bid	no bid	no bid
GCAS/Region 2	no bid	no bid	no bid
GCAS/Region 4	no bid	no bid	no bid

Source: T&M/AMS USDA. Data from www.bnsf.com, www.uprr.com,
(COT=Certificate of Transportation; GCAS=Grain Car Allocation System)

Southbound Barge Freight Nominal Values

Index=Percent of Tariff, Based on 1976 Tariff Benchmark Rate

Week ended	River/Region	Contract Period	Rate Bid	Rate Offer
12/5/00	St. Louis	twk	125	135
		nwk.	130	135
		2nd half Dec.	130	140
		Jan.-Mar.	130	140
	Illinois River	twk	160	170
		nwk.	170	175
		12/17	170	180
	Lower Ohio	twk	135	145
		12/17	140	145
		Jan.	150	155
		Mar.	140	145

Summary Of Daily Barge Trades Reported To St. Louis Merchants Exchange.

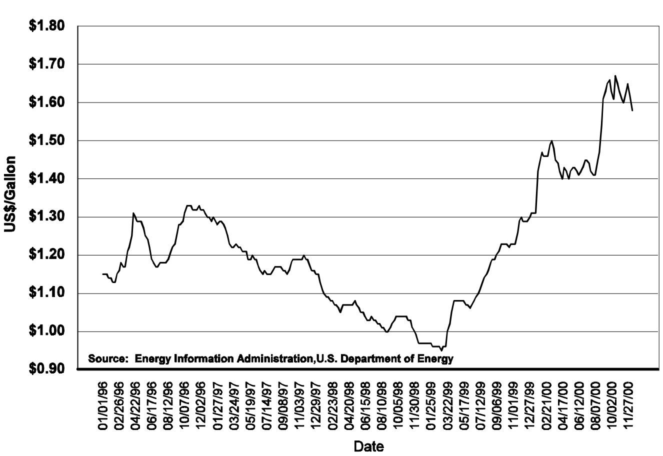
*Traded rates

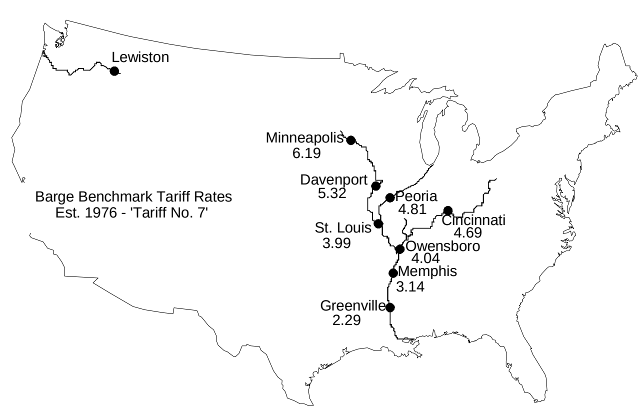
Southbound Barge Freight Spot Rates

	12/13/00	12/6/00	Jan. '00	Mar. '00
Twin Cities	0	0	0	210
Mid-Mississippi	0	0	0	186
Illinois River	202	177	202	178
St. Louis	159	129	150	138
Lower Ohio	144	141	153	150
Cairo-Memphis	131	118	135	132

Source: Transportation & Marketing /AMS/USDA
nq=no quote;

Weekly Retail Diesel (Road) Prices (Including Taxes)



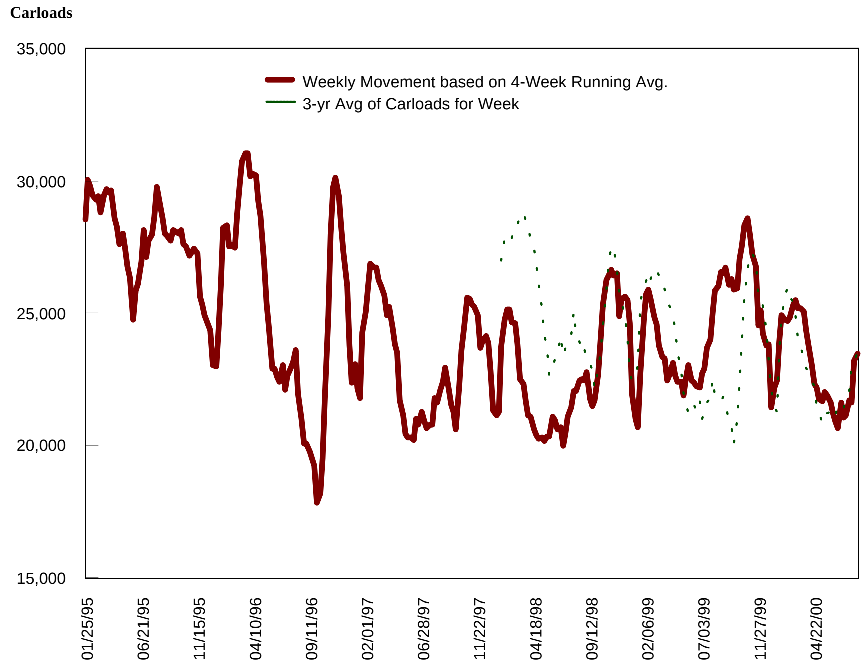


Class I Railroad Grain Car Loadings

Week Ending:	Carloads
11/25/00	17,261
12/02/00	21,255
12/09/00	22,550
Year to Date - 2000	1,135,247
Year to Date - 1999	1,207,628
Total 1999	1,269,741
Total 1998	1,186,117

Source: Association of American Railroads

Grain Car Loadings for Class I Railroads



Class I Rail Carrier Grain Car Bulletin

Grain Carloads Originated

	East				West			Canada	
	Conrail	**CSXT**	**IC**	**NS**	**BNSF**	**KCS**	**UP**	**CN**	**CP**
12/09/00	0	3,465	0	2,989	9,004	363	6,729	4,715	5,234
This Week Last Year	0	2,794	1,585	2,996	7,833	501	7,278	3,292	4,660
2000 YTD	0	140,108	70,155	146,477	404,080	25,432	348,995	149,169	228,215
1999 YTD	15,522	124,473	84,039	130,998	442,348	31,834	379,414	115,386	198,005
1999 Total	15,522	132,157	88,056	138,379	465,088	33,911	398,262	121,381	206,328
1998 Total	40,192	126,128	77,811	131,158	431,459	34,503	342,609	113,568	215,005

Source: Association of American Railroads

Tariff Rail Rates for Unit Train Shipments

December 2000

Date Effective	Tariff Item	Commodity	Origin	Destination	Rate Per Car	Rate Per MT	Rate/Per Bushel*
12/04/00	45560	Wheat	Minneapolis, MN	Houston, TX	$2,050	$22.60	$0.62
12/04/00	43521	Wheat	Minneapolis, MN	Portland, OR	$3,877	$42.74	$1.16
12/04/00	46540	Wheat	Kansas City, MO	Houston, TX	$1,550	$17.09	$0.47
12/04/00	43586	Wheat	Kansas City, MO	Portland, OR	$4,240	$46.74	$1.27
12/04/00	43581	Wheat	Omaha, NE	Portland, OR	$3,905	$43.04	$1.17
12/04/00	31040	Corn	Minneapolis, MN	Portland, OR	$2,900	$31.97	$0.81
12/04/00	31035	Corn	Kansas City, MO	Portland, OR	$2,700	$29.76	$0.76
12/04/00	31040	Corn	Omaha, NE	Portland, OR	$2,700	$29.76	$0.76
12/04/00	61180	Soybean	Minneapolis, MN	Portland, OR	$2,680	$29.54	$0.80
12/04/00	61180	Soybean	Omaha, NE	Portland, OR	$2,430	$26.79	$0.73
05/01/98	61180	Soybean	Omaha, NE	Portland, OR	$2,780	$25.23	$0.83

Source: www.bnsf.com

Approximate load per car = 100 tons: Corn 56 lbs/bu, Wheat & Soybeans 60 lbs/bu

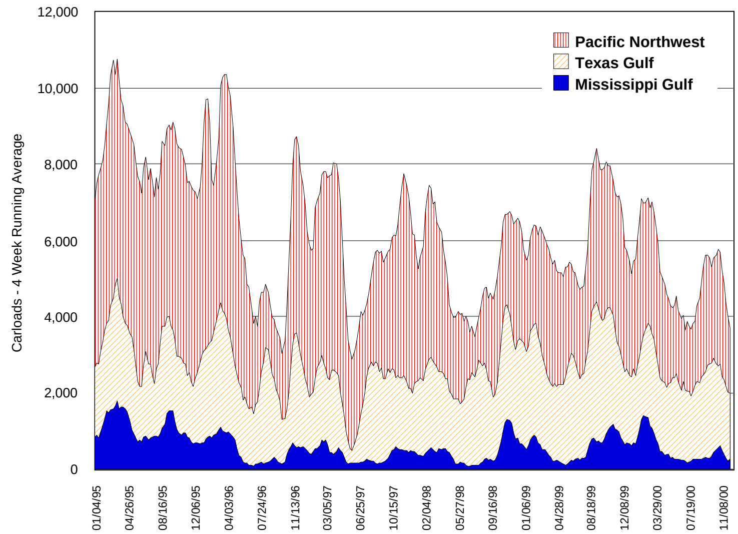
Rail Deliveries to Port
Carloads

	Mississippi Gulf	Texas Gulf	Pacific Northwest	Atlantic & East Gulf
Week Ending:				
11/08/00	231*	1,701	2,780	455
11/15/00	106*	1,870	2,043	519
11/22/00	230*	1,794	1,901*	358
11/29/00	309*	1,827	1,218*	367
12/06/00	397*	1,439	1,707	201
12/13/00	411*	1,677*	947*	345
YTD 2000	25,449*	102,486*	124,650*	14,556
YTD 1999	28,570	128,068	155,353	14,120
Total 1998	23,844	115,321	138,461	12,505
Total 1997	20,152	93,265	195,953	9,147

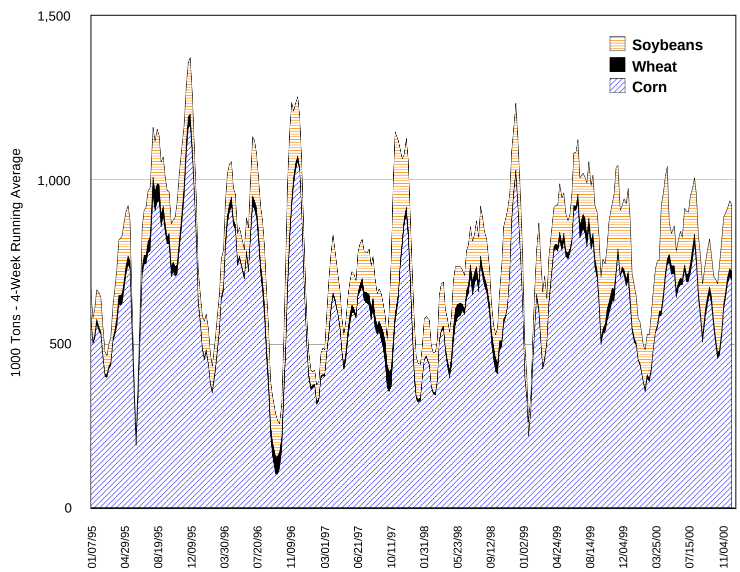
Source: Transportation & Marketing/AMS/USDA

(*) Incomplete Data

Rail Deliveries to Port



Barge Movements - Locks 27



Barge Grain Movements
for week ending 12/09/00

	Corn	Wht	Sybn	Total
		1,000 Tons		
Mississippi River				
Rock Island, IL (L15)	119	11	57	188
Winfield, MO (L25)	429	2	190	638
Alton, IL (L26)	720	12	263	1,012
Granite City, IL (L27)	683	20	244	965
Illinois River (L8)	230	16	59	305
Ohio (L52)	85	15	68	217
Arkansas (L1)	14	7	0	21
2000 YTD	32,292	2,387	9,908	46,364
1999 YTD	35,002	2,755	9,103	49,276
Total 1999	36,711	2,883	9,771	51,887
Total 1998	31,001	2,401	8,674	45,134

Miss YTD: Calendar year totals include Miss/27, Ohio/52 and Ark/1.
Source: U.S. Army Corp of Engineers; n/a=not available

U.S. Export Balances (1,000 Metric Tons)

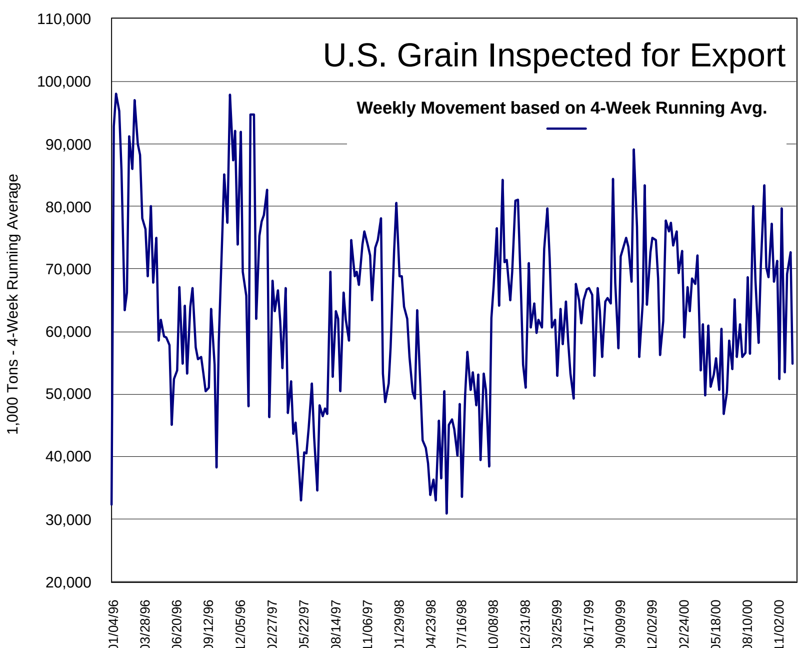
	Wheat						Corn	Soybean	Total
	HRW	*SRW*	*HRS*	*SWW*	*DUR*	*All*			
Unshipped Exports-Crop Year									
12/07/00	1,075	391	847	682	242	3,237	6,664	5,916	15,817
This Week Year Ago	1,089	793	983	755	268	3,889	8,351	4,902	17,142
Cumulative Exports-Crop Year									
99/00 YTD	5,374	2,573	3,001	2,702	634	14,283	12,954	9,439	36,676
98/99 YTD	6,720	2,028	2,997	2,116	498	14,358	14,278	17,713	46,349
97/98 Total	9,858	4,710	6,305	5,413	1,232	27,518	37,220	24,516	89,254
96/97 Total	7,387	3,645	7,864	6,105	963	25,965	44,476	24,501	94,942

Source: Foreign Agricultural Service YTD-Year-to-Date (www.fas.usda.gov) Crop Year:Wheat=5/31-6/01, Corn & Soybeans=9/01-8/31

Select U.S. Port Regions - Grain Inspections for Export - 1,000 Metric Tons

	Pacific Region			Mississippi Gulf			Texas Gulf		
	Wheat	*Corn*	*Soybean*	*Wheat*	*Corn*	*Soybean*	*Wheat*	*Corn*	*Soybean*
12/14/00	280	55	0	127	588	326	70	0	0
2000 YTD	9,601	5,813	1,588	6,521	33,830	17,177	6,805	464	968
1999 YTD *	9,515	8,668	1,076	6,559	34,069	14,410	8,416	551	1,357
% of Last Year	89%	133%	244%	129%	108%	115%	94%	83%	69%
1998 Total	10,838	4,373	651	5,048	31,330	14,917	7,270	562	1,392

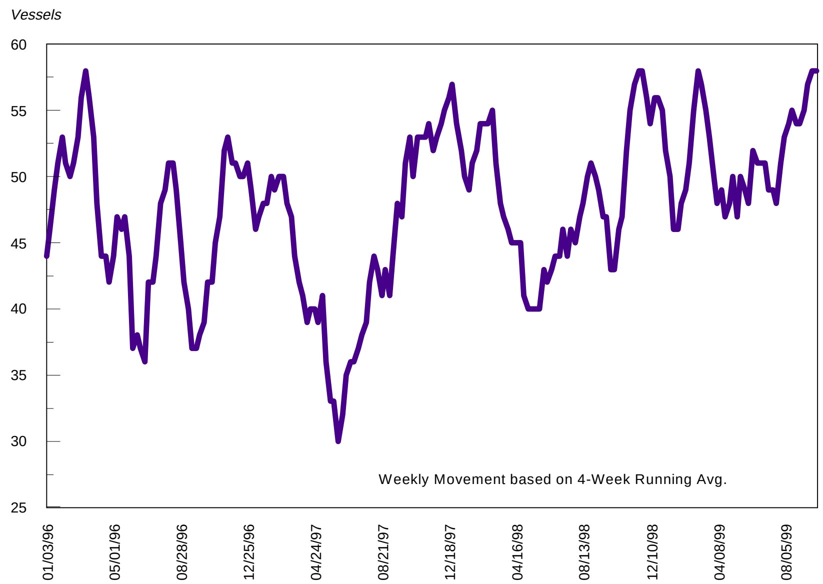
Source: Federal Grain Inspection Service * YTD-Year-to-Date ('98 = 53 week period)



Select Canadian Ports - Export Inspections
1,000 Metric Tons, Crop Year

	Wheat	Durum	Barley
Week Ended: 12/14/00			
Vancouver	2,563	180	440
Prince Rupert	190		0
Prairie Direct	446	155	104
Thunder Bay	486	152	21
St. Lawrence	1,297	860	0
2000 YTD Exports	4,982	1,347	579
1999 YTD Exports	4,980	1,379	472
% of Last Year	100%	98%	123%

Source: Canadian Grains Commission
YTD-Year-to-Date Crop Year 8/1-7/31



Gulf Region Vessels Loaded - Past 7 Days-

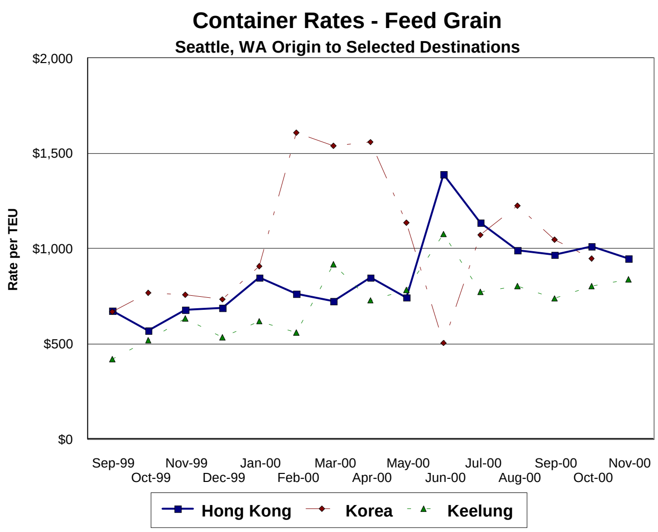
Port Region Ocean Grain Vessels

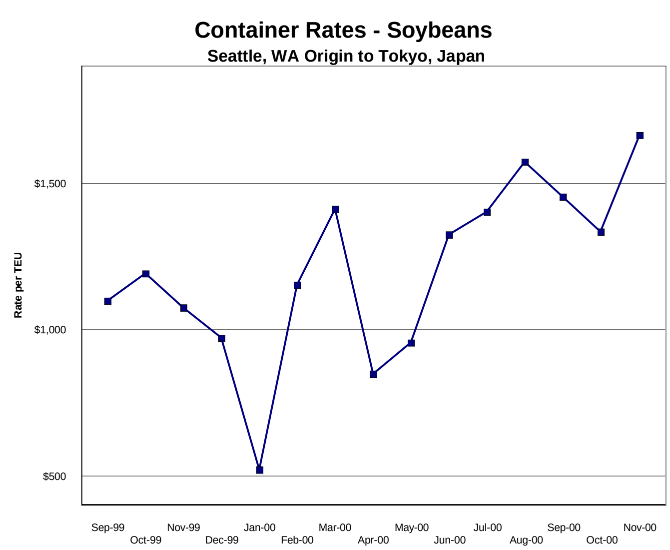
	Gulf			Pacific Northwest			Vancouver, B.C.		
	In Port	Loaded 7-Days	Due Next 10-Days	In Port	Loaded 7-Days	Due Next 10-Days	In Port	Loaded 7-Days	Due Next 10-Days
12/07/00	43	50	71	8			12	11	2
12/14/00	38	50	62	13			16	10	1
1999 Range	(14..47)	(39..65)	(34..80)	(6..18)			(2..20)	(2..15)	(0..9)
1998 Range	(19..62)	(34..64)	(40..93)				(1..19)	(3..14)	(0..10)
1999 Avg	32	52	65				9	9	3
1998 Avg	40	48	61				10	9	3
1997 Avg	33	45	58						

Source: Transportation & Marketing /AMS/ USDA

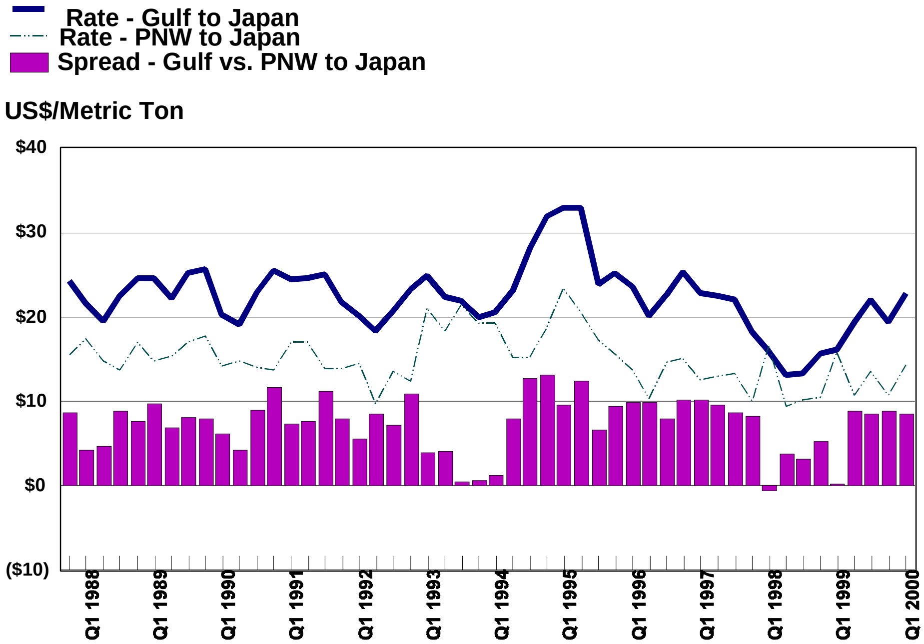
Container Ocean Freight Rates

Monthly Weighted Averages Based on Shipping Line Monthly Mkt. Share





Source: Transportation & Marketing/AMS/USDA



Quarterly Ocean Freight Rates

Quarterly Ocean Freight Rates

Average Rates & Percentage Changes, U.S. Dollars/Metric Ton - Basis

Gulf to	2000 3rd Qtr	1999 3rd Qtr	% Change	Pacific NW to	2000 3rd Qtr	1999 3rd Qtr	% Change
Japan	$24.76	$19.46	27%	Japan	$15.43	$10.71	44%
Mexico	$16.11	$14.97	8%	Red Sea/ Arabian Sea	$29.03		
Venezuela	$15.13	$12.64	20%				
N. Europe	$18.07	$13.31	36%				
N. Africa	$34.19	$18.20	88%	**Argentina to**			
				N. Europe	$18.62	$13.94	34%
				Japan	$36.42	$23.00	58%

Source: Transportation & Marketing/AMS/USDA; (*) rates shown are for metric ton (2,204.62 lbs.=one metric ton)

Ocean Freight Rates (Select Locations) - week ending 12/16/00

Export Region	Import Region	Grain	Month	Volume Loaded (Tons)	Freight Rate ($Ton)
Gulf	Lisbon	Grains	Dec.15/20	50,000	$12.60
Gulf	Egypt	Heavy Grain	Dec.15/24	60,000	$13.25
Gulf	Tunisia	Heavy Grain	Dec.20/30	25,000	$21.00
Gulf	Indonesia	Meals	Dec.25/Jan.2	35,000	$29.00
Gulf	Taiwan	Heavy Grain	Jan.1/10	56,000	$20.50
Gulf	Japan	Heavy Grain	Jan.5/24	54,000	$21.25
Gulf	Japan	Heavy Grain	Dec.25/Jan.5	54,000	$20.85
Seattle	Taiwan	Heavy Grain	Dec.20/29	58,000	$15.75
So. Africa	Japan	Heavy Grain	Dec.15/20	28,000	$25.00
Thailand	Senegal/Cameroon	Rice (Bagged)	Dec.17/22	14,000	$41.00

Source: Maritime Research Inc.; rates shown are for long ton (2,240 lbs.=one long ton), F.O.B., except where otherwise indicated; op=option